

Theological Theses concerning the eternal election and predestination of human beings in which the use of those words in the Roman and Protestant schools is explained. Then, how in those same schools the effects and object of predestination are assigned.

1. The word “predestination” is used variously in the Roman school. For, according to some of their doctors, predestination only covers that decree by which God absolutely established from eternity to confer heavenly glory to certain human beings. But for other Romanists, predestination is more limited to the decree of conferring the means conducive to infallibly bring certain human beings to heavenly glory. Finally, others argue that both these decrees pertain to predestination. This is what Eustachius a Sancto Pauli observes in *Summa Theologiae*, de Praedestinatione, Q. 3.

2. The first meaning is rarer. Nevertheless, some of the older scholastics, like Gabriel Biel and Ockham, seem to understand the word “predestination” in such a way that it appears to be nothing other than that eternal council of God by which he decreed to give glory to certain people. This is clear from those things which Gregory of Valencia notes, Tom. 1. Disp. 1, Quest. 23, which is about predestination, point 3.

3. But the greatest part of the scholastics take predestination in the second way, namely for the preparation of grace, so that it is distinguished from election to glory. You can find this in Martinus Becanus, In *Summa Theologiae*, Tom. 1, Cap 14, Q. 2., Concl. 2.

4. But many of the doctors of the Roman Church define predestination as not only the preparation of grace, but also the preparation of glory to which that grace pertains. According to these doctors, predestination is *the eternal decree or purpose of God by which God ordains and directs certain people to supernatural blessedness by those supernatural means fit to the obtaining of it*. The recently mentioned Eustachius a Sancto Paulo, Peter a Sancto Joseph, Gregory of Valencia, Estius, and many others hold to this view.

5. But Jansen and his disciples—following Augustine on this point—understand predestination in a sense still more general. For they think that predestination covers not only the good [side] but the bad [side], though not with regard to sin, but regarding punishment. Hence, reprobates are no less able to be said to be predestined to eternal suffering by God as the elect are predestined to glory and blessedness. From this they make predestination to be twofold—one to life, and the other to death. One can see this with Jansen *De Gratia Christi Salvatoris*, lib. 9., Cap. 3.

6. Election is similarly restricted by many scholastics to the decree by which God decreed to give glory to some human beings, instead of others. And so, they distinguish this from what they mean by predestination, that is, a decree with respect to the conferring of means fit to obtaining glory.

Alphonsus Mendoza, professor at Salamanca, makes this observation in his scholastic question concerning predestination, the second section. But many others refer election, as with predestination, no less to grace than to glory. Indeed, they want election to cover that decree regarding the giving of grace as well as a decree of conferring glory.

7. But just as predestination in the Roman schools is received and defined variously by various theologians, so they do not all assign its effects in the same way. For those, who understand the word predestination as only denoting that decree by which God prepared from eternity heavenly glory for certain people, do not assign any other effect than the imparting of glory itself. Nor do they wish that the gifts of grace be numbered as among the effects of predestination. This is the view of both William Ockham and Gabriel Biel, as can be seen in Gregory of Valencia, Tom. 1, Q. 23., Point 3.

8. But others insist the contrary, that only the means [fit] for eternal blessedness are the effects of predestination, but not the acquisition of blessedness itself. They do this because they limit the word predestination to the decree of communicating grace, and consequently they do not want the word to include the decree of granting glory. This is the opinion of Durandus, as the same Gregory of Valencia testifies in the recently-cited place

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9. Today, however, the more common belief of the doctors of the Roman Church is that the effects of predestination are not only supernatural blessedness itself, but also those particular means by which each predestinated person supernaturally obtains this blessedness. And therefore, they enumerate the three general effects of predestination which the Apostle notes in Romans 8, namely: *Vocation*, *justification*, and *glorification*. Indeed, by the word predestination they understand both the decree of conferring heavenly blessedness upon certain human beings and the decree concerning the means by which they are led to the enjoyment of that blessedness.

10. But there are some theologians of the Roman School who enumerate far more effects of predestination: And among other effects they include the permission of those sins into which the elect fall, and therefore the permission of the very first sin. Indeed, they even assign to the effects of predestination the very creation and preservation of those who are predestined. This is what Estius especially does in 1 Sent., Dist. 40., Paragraph 7.

11. In fact, Alphonsus Mendoza of the Augustinians (already cited above), professor at Salamanca, goes even further. For he expressly holds that the first act of all divine acts was predestination, from which all the other decrees concerning the founding of the world, creation of human beings, the permitting of sin, etc., follow. Therefore, he wants the creation and preservation of this whole world—indeed the very reprobation of the demons and of the impious including their just damnation—to be numbered among the effects of the predestination of Christ and the elect. And, in a word, he continually insists that nothing whatsoever of any kind, whether something small or big, is brought about by God or permitted which is not an effect of predestination and a means ordained to bringing it about.

12. For in his *Theological Controversies* (the already cited first scholastic question about predestination, section six) this is his second conclusion: “The mind of God presupposes the foreknowledge of nothing future for predestination, but everything follows from it. And therefore, God decrees from eternity to do absolutely nothing, nor in time does he make or permit anything, either natural or supernatural, whether it is a thing of great

importance or of little importance. And practically everything which comes into existence is an effect and means of the predestination of the elect and Christ. And, so, everything is subordinate to divine predestination as means ordained for the glory of Christ and the saints.”

13. So, this is his third conclusion: “There is not any other providence of God antecedent to predestination, from which natural and some other supernatural effects come into being. But providence is no less unique and is itself a predestination, from which everything in the universe must follow with absolutely no exception. And therefore, according to this conclusion, the whole world—including the natural and supernatural, good and evil, substances and accidents, and all modes of being and acting in the world, not only in general, but specifically, and individually—should be considered as one complete object of divine predestination. Thus, just as absolutely nothing evades the extent of that object, so there is nothing which does not fall under that act of predestination.”

[No Thesis 14]

15. But from this it is possible to deduce in what way those two doctors think that a person is the object of predestination by God, namely, in the divine foreknowledge as neither fallen nor created, but rather simply as possible or creatable. For given that the permission of the fall of the first man, and even the creation of man himself, is enumerated by them as among the effects of predestination, it is necessary that, from their perspective, foreknowledge of the fall and creation did not precede the decree of predestination in God,

according to our mode of understanding, but rather followed it. And so, God was not able in predestinating mankind to consider them as fallen or created, but only as creatable by him. Estius with Mendoza acknowledges this: “We thus do not call it ‘the predestination of fallen man’ as if the foreknowledge of the fall of the first man and in him the whole human race preceded in God (according to our mode of understanding) the predestination of some from the whole race of mankind to eternal life.” (Distinction 40 of book 1 of the Sentences, paragraph 6).

16. But Alphonsus Mendoza shows that not a few of the scholastics—both the older and more recent scholastics—think the same thing as he does regarding this point. Cf. the already mentioned question, section four. There, he cites for himself Bishop of Chioggia Jacob Naclantus, , Albert Pighius, Peter Galatinus, Ambrosius Catharinus, and the man whom he prefers above all the others, Duns Scotus, whom he quotes many times, from which quotes it is clear that according to the subtle doctor, God predestined the elect and willed the gifts of grace for them before he had willed this sensible world, which God willed from eternity for the sake of predestined man, on account of whom he established to create all of visible nature.

17. But the more common opinion in the Roman Schools is that when God predestined from eternity certain people, he considered them as fallen in Adam, and corrupt in their sin. For commonly, their theologians believe that that decree by which God predestined certain people to salvation, according to our mode of conception, followed the foreknowledge of the fall of the first

man, and from that, the attendant original sin, by which the whole race of mankind has been infected.

18. But when one turns to look at those who among the Protestants are solely called by the name “Reformed,” many of them define the word predestination as that whole part of divine providence, by which God decreed and established with himself before the foundation of the world that which considers either the eternal salvation or the death and destruction of every human being. And hence, they distinguish the eternal predestination of God between that which is to life and salvation, and that which is to death and destruction. And the former they commonly call election; the latter is commonly called reprobation in the schools. This is how Zanchi, Beza, Ursinus, Perkins, Polanus, Bucanus, and many others, and even the Synod of Dordt, use the term predestination.

19. Nevertheless, not a few of the Reformed doctors think that the term predestination, according to its use in Scripture, should only denote the pleasant side. And hence, by predestination they mean only those acts of the divine will and mind, by which God has immutably established with himself to lead certain human beings to heavenly life and glory, and those means afforded to them which are necessary to achieve this end. For they do not restrict predestination only to the preparation of grace, as many of the scholastics do. Instead, they understand the word predestination to include both the decree about the end, as well as the decree about the means; that is, a decree about giving glory to certain people as well as a decree about the grace which is to be communicated to them.

20. And they use the word election in the same sense. Since by election they understand that decree by which God from eternity selects some people from among others in order that he might make them participants of the grace of Christ in this life, and crown them with glory in the life to come; therefore both election and predestination are understood by them to be synonyms.

21. Yet, some seem to properly designate by the term election the decree concerning some certain people to be effectually called to Christ and given true and living faith. So, election, according to them, has more to do with the communication of grace than the giving of glory. This is how the term election is commonly used by Testard in his *Irenicum*, Louis Cappell in his theses on election and reprobation, and by Moses Amyraut everywhere, and others who follow the doctrine and method of [John] Cameron.

22. There is also some difference of opinion among the theologians in the Reformed schools around the question of in what regard and condition is mankind the object of divine predestination. First, some in their assigning an object of predestination and election ascend beyond the fall of man and even the creation of man himself. And indeed, they want the decree of predestinating certain people to salvation in God, according to our mode of conceiving it, to be prior not only to the foresight of the fall of man into sin, but even the decree regarding the creation of man. And accordingly, the object of predestination itself is man neither created nor fallen in the foreknowledge of God, but instead man creatable. This is why they are called “supralapsarians” by other theologians. Of which number are Zanchi, Beza,



Piscator, Perkins, Ursinus, Gomarus, Polanus, Voetius, Twisse, and not a few more!

23. But the greatest part of the doctors of the Reformed schools have considered, in the act of God predestinating, its object to have been a mass of humanity corrupted by sin, and they do not think that the decree about creating mankind and the permission of the first fall of man ought to enter into the whole decree of predestination, nor do they wish to make those former decrees a part of that latter decree. But in their view, the foresight of the fall of man exists prior in God, according to our mode of conceiving it, to the decree regarding the granting and manifesting of mercy in the salvation of some people, which, by these theologians, is called election or predestination. And hence, according to them, the object of election and predestination is fallen man, having been corrupted by sin. And we ought not to extend that description and definition [of predestination and election to] before the fall of man and creation. And this view most conforms to the Canons of the Synod of Dordt. And a very great number of Reformed theologians follow that position, whose names, were we to enumerate them, would be too lengthy and unnecessary.

24. But among the Reformed are found some who make the object of election to be not simply fallen man, having been corrupted by sin, but additionally those called by an external call to participation and communion in the grace of Christ. For they do not want to make the decree of Christ being sent as a redeemer, nor [that decree] about that grace offered to people through the preaching of the word, to be a part of the decree of predestination, and

subordinated to that decree about the giving of eternal salvation to this or that person. Instead, they establish, according to our mode of consideration, that God first decreed to send Christ into the world before he decreed to effectually lead some people to life and salvation by true faith in Christ.

25. This was the opinion of George Sohnius once a professor of theology at Heidelberg Academy. For in the second volume of his *Opera*, he defines the predestination of man in this way: “It is a decree of God by which he preordained from eternity all human beings foreknown by him as fallen and called to Christ by the gospel to either life or death in order to eternally make known his glory.” But in explaining this definition he adds this: “That predestination was made in accordance with the prescience of God, that is, God preordained human beings foreknown to him, and therefore as corrupted by sin, and called through the gospel of Christ. For from eternity in his predestinating of them, he considered them not simply as people foreknown to him, but as people having fallen into sin and to be called again by Christ in the gospel.” To which he adds afterwards: “The object or matter of predestination is fallen mankind, and called again by the gospel. For this call is universal.” This is in his *Exposition of the Chief Articles of the Augsburg Confession*, the tract about eternal predestination, pg. 1000. Testard approved of and followed Sohnius’s position in his book *On Nature and Grace*, in the chapter on the will and decree of grace, section 9. And to his name, it is also necessary to add all those who follow the method and doctrine of Cameron in the doctrine of the redemption of man and the doctrine of election, since (?) they wish to stand on their own opinions.[\[1\]](#)

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[\[1\]](#) This last clause is tricky.

26. But just as various theologians think variously about the object of predestination and election, so also it is necessary that they think different things about the effects of predestination and election. For those who hold that the object of predestination is mankind neither created nor fallen, but simply mankind creatable and able to be produced by God place the creation and the permission of the fall among the means by which God acquires his intended end in predestination. Therefore, the creation and permission of the fall are, in their judgment, effects of predestination—indeed for some to life, but for others to death and destruction. You can see this position in Beza, Perkins, Bucanus, Polanus, and others of the same mind.

27. But those who deem the object of predestination and election to be man as he is considered by God fallen and corrupt by sin, and who do not subordinate the decree of creation and the permission of the fall to the decree about the demonstration of God's justice and mercy among mankind, some for salvation, but for others his just punishment, do not think the creation of man nor the permission of the fall should be numbered among the effects of predestination. But they only want the effects of election to be those various means by which God frees human beings from sin and leads them to blessedness and eternal life. Among these means they place the first and principal as the giving itself of the mediator, Christ, and his being sent into the world.

28. Finally, those for whom the object of election and predestination is not simply man as fallen, but additionally, called to the grace and communion of Christ, are not able to number the sending of Christ into the world and the redemption completed by his death to be among the effects of election. This follows because, according to them, the decree concerning the sending of Christ and concerning the redemption of the human race through Christ precedes the decree of election, and is presupposed by it. But the chief and proper effect of election is, according to them, *the giving of true faith in time*. And it follows that the conferment of the rest of Christ's benefits by which one is led to eternal life is an effect of that same election.

29. Additionally, it is plain from what has been said that the words predestination and election both in the Roman and Reformed communions are not used in the same way and sense. And both schools of theology understand the terms in various ways. However, there are certain uses of those words abundantly accepted in the Roman school which the Reformed school does not grant, and, by the same token, [there are] uses of those words by many Reformed theologians in a sense which cannot be found in the Roman School.

30. Hence, many of the scholastics, as we have seen, are accustomed to understand by the word "predestination" only the preparation of grace and to distinguish it from the decree of election by which glory is destined to certain people while passing over others. Thus, election is a decree about the end, but predestination is a decree about the means. But the Reformed never restrict the word of predestination in this way. Instead, they regularly mean by it both the decree of the giving of glory as an end and the decree of the conferring of the

helps and gifts of grace so that by these efficacious and necessary means one might be led to that end. And you hardly even see among them the word election restricted to the decree concerning the communication of glory. But not a few of them seem to restrict predestination to the decree about the giving of faith, and they think the term better fits with grace than glory, which meaning is unusual among the Roman Schools. Among the latter—if you omit Jansen and his disciples—very rarely is the word predestination taken to denote anything other than the positive side [i.e., not reprobation]. And hardly ever is it made to include the decree concerning the destruction of certain people. On the other hand, predestination is a middle term among many of the Reformed Doctors, by which the decree of God is in general designated, a decree by which human beings are ordained either to life or death. Concerning this decree, thus, they constitute two species [of predestination], namely, election and reprobation.

31. Additionally, it is clear from what was said above that neither the doctors of the Roman church nor of the Reformed church agree among themselves about the effects of election or predestination when it is understood as the “positive/good side.” And indeed, just as it was noted by us before, there is a variety and discrepancy of opinion over this issue both in the Roman and Reformed schools. Likewise, or nearly likewise, one will find on both sides a diversity of judgments and opinions on this subject. For just as not a few doctors of the Reformed schools number creation itself and the permission of the fall among the effects of predestination for those [predestined] to salvation, so some theologians in the Catholic church also do the same as Estius noted before, Alphonsus Mendoza, and others mentioned above. See Domingo Báñez

in primam Thom. Q. 23 on the second article, second doubt. And just as many doctors in the Roman school deny and reject that aforementioned view, so also a great part of the doctors of the Reformed school deny and reject the same.

32. Just as theologians in both the Roman church and Reformed church philosophize variously about the effects of election and predestination, so among both groups their judgments vary—there being not a small difference of opinion concerning the object of predestination and election, that is, as it is asked for what reason and in what respect is man the object of God’s predestination. And nearly the same distinction of views which is found in the Reformed school can be found also in the Roman Catholic school. This is able to be gleaned from what has been previously mentioned above.

33. Indeed, it is important to observe that just as there are some among the Reformed who think that the object of predestination is simply man creatable, but not man considered as already created and fallen, and [thus] think that there is no antecedent prevision of the creation and fall of the person who is chosen by the decree of predestination, so not a few in the Roman church also hold that same view—all those, namely, who think that the creation of the predestined and the permission of their fall into sin have a place among the effects of predestination, and who insist that the creation itself advanced the decree of predestination, and is a means subordinate to that end in God’s predestination in order to attain that end. Concerning which number, beyond Scotus, Phigius, Naclantus, Catharinum, as we taught above, there is William Estius, Alphonsus Mendoza, and the Dominican Báñez, from whose doctrine,

in the place cited above, man as a mere possibility is the object in God's predestination. And just as there are many in the Roman school who back away from this view, so also a great part of the doctors in the Reformed school also disapprove of and condemn that view. And finally, just as there are many among the Reformed who make the object of predestination fallen mankind, so also there are many in the Roman school who commonly hold to this view.

34. But now, if anyone looks for the importance of that question about the object and effects of predestination, I respond that there is a lot of logomachy. For those who disagree on these things do not define predestination the same way. Some, by the term, want it to embrace many divine decrees, but others only want it to embrace a few. Indeed, the former deny this and want the act of divine providence to be included in predestination, but the latter affirm it. For, those who make creatable or possible man the object of predestination so enlarge the definition of election and predestination that that divine decree about the creation of man and the permission his fall is brought into it. Indeed some, like Alphonsus Mendoza, introduce in a certain way all of providence back into predestination. Given this, it is necessary that creation be its effect, and man, as he is at this point considered "to be created" by God, is not rightly made its object.[1]

35. But those who think that fallen and sinful man is in the divine foreknowledge the object of predestination, and consequently deny that the creation of man and permission of sin ought to be numbered among the effects of predestination, define the term in such a way that it does not embrace the divine decree about the creation of man, the permission of his fall, but that

decree is presupposed by it—as something prior—according to our mode of conceiving things. But wherever there is no agreement about the definition of a thing, there is bound to be much logomachy and contention over words.

36. But in this matter and in many others, this rule ought to be followed, namely that when we give some meaning of expressions, we follow, if it can be done, the Scripture-use, or at least we should accept no other uses than those which are accustomed to be commonly accepted in the Christian schools. Therefore, seeing that predestination is accustomed to be distinguished from common providence in the schools, and commonly the gifts of grace are assigned to the former, but the gifts of nature to the latter, creation seems less suitably to be placed among the effects of predestination, and consequently man not-yet-made by God is established as its object, but simply creatable. They enlarge the word “predestination” too much who bring in to it the decree itself of creating man, and of permitting his fall.

37. But if anyone searches deeper, asking whence it is that some theologians thus restrict the word of predestination while others extend its meaning, I respond: it stems from the fact that some attribute more, and some less, acts and effects of divine providence to the end intended by God in the predestination of certain people, which end is the illumination of the divine mercy in their salvation. For, on this point, theologians seem to agree that all the acts and effects of God’s providence have been brought back to the predestination and reprobation of men, which acts and effects as such are assigned for both the manifestation of divine mercy and of justice among certain people, either in their eternal salvation or just punishment. But some



deny that to be the end intended by God in the creation of man, others, however, affirm it. For the latter, the eternal decree of God concerning the creation of man begins the decree of predestination, and makes up a part of it. But this is not so with the former group with whom we more probably agree. *Indeed, the creation of man does not seem to be assigned as such and directly to the manifestation of divine mercy or justice, but rather to the illustration of the divine power, goodness, and wisdom.*

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[1] If I understand this correctly, because Mendoza brings all which would (ordinarily) fall under providence into “predestination,” then creation itself is a part of predestination. And if creation itself is a part of predestination then it is an effect of predestination. And if it is an effect, then the creation of man is likewise an effect. And if man is an effect of predestination, he can’t be the object of predestination!